

The Peasant at Work

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At first I had to hire a driver for the tractor but my boy rode around with him, asked a few questions, and learned how to drive. So the second season I turned the tractor over to my son. Unfortunately, some people start driving before they know how and that is why an inexperienced person killed two men the other day not far from here.

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Alekos estimated that only 30 percent of the tractor owners hired drivers and that the rest of the owners drove themselves or had members of their family who could drive. He thought that this shift away from hiring drivers would mean a trend from the bigger tractors to smaller tractors for, as he put it, "If you are going to pay for a driver you might as well get a larger tractor and get your money's worth out of the driver. If you are going to do the work yourself, a small tractor is sufficient." Not many of them who now drove, he thought, were very skillful at repairs; they were dependent on the tractor shops in town or upon the traveling automobile-borne shops which came out to the village when necessary.

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In the midst of our conversation on tractors, Alekos interrupted to say, much to the amusement of the three other men who had gathered around the stone wall where we sat, that he had at first been suspicious of us: "Some of us thought you were either tax collectors or officials from the Agricultural Bank. We were ready to run away until we heard somebody cry out, 'Americans!'"

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That reminded one of the bystanders of a good story he had heard from an acquaintance in the Peloponnesos who lived near Messenia. It seems that while a funeral procession was under way there, those participating saw a car with a policeman and other officials thought to be tax collectors. In perfect unison the pallbearers rested the coffin in the middle of the road and disappeared as though into thin air, leaving the officials confronting the lonely coffin.

After a laugh all around the circle, we steered Alekos back onto the subject of his tractor in order to find out why he had bought a Lantz tractor instead of an American tractor. He thought the latter much more complicated. Diesel tractors, both German and American-made, are preferred to the gas-driven type.

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"Has the tractor made much difference in your life?"

Alekos furrowed his brows and thought a moment. "Yes, it has made me work much harder to pay off the debt I owe because of the tractor." He agreed that the machine had probably not lightened his wife's work very much, but a shrug of the shoulders seemed to imply, "why should it?"

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Throughout the plains area of Greece I met many men like Alekos who, in one financial plunge, had leaped from the peasant farming of their fathers into the machine farming of the Western world.⁴ Unlike Alekos, some of them seemed to think that the work of the women as well as that of the men had been considerably lightened. One man from Schematari,

Ceremonies and Holy Days

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THE ANNUAL VILLAGE FESTIVAL

The annual village festival, held on the name day of the saint for whom the local church is named, although a community event, serves also as an occasion for absent family members to return for a visit.* On such days literally hundreds and sometimes more than a thousand outsiders visit the village to join in the local excitement. Many families have so many guests that they hardly know where to put them all; food and drink are plentiful, and dancing is the order of the day. The local shopkeepers count heavily on this occasion to bring them out of the red, even though traveling merchants also make their appearance to take care of the swollen number of clients. The local government sees to it that these outsiders or their transactions are taxed. A relatively few attend the masses being held in the church since the festival is more secular than religious. One is impressed in talking with villagers about these festivals how frequently they stress the fact that they all "put on the best clothes and new clothes if possible" in order to make a good impression upon the visitors and other villagers as well.

Throughout Greece one can see many well-known national dances on these festival days. Most of them are round dances, with the dancers holding on to hands or wrists of those next to them. The musicians stand in the center of the circle and strike up the tune. A slow "dragging-trailing" dance is called the *syrtos*; one calling for jumping or leaping steps is a *pidictos*; and others are mixed. Many of these dances have much in common with ancient dances depicted on friezes or described in the writings of classical times.

An example of the *syrtos* type is the *kalamatianos*, named for the town of Kalamata in the southern Peloponnesos. Here the dancers hold each other by the wrist. The leader of the dance may break away from the circle and go through gyrations which would do credit to a professional acrobat; throughout this performance he flutters his handkerchief (the symbol of leadership), and when ready he may throw the handkerchief to his neighbor or someone else who wishes to lead the dance. The *geranos*, another *syrtos* dance, is supposed to have been danced by Theseus and the youths and maidens with him on Delos when he returned there after slaying the Minotaur on Crete. The movements of the dance are said to imitate the twists and turns of the labyrinth which was the lair of the mythological monster.*

Another *syrtos* dance is the *zalongos*, which commemorates the dance of the Souliote women in Epirus who, upon the defeat of their men folk in December 1803 by Ali Pasha of Ioannina, took refuge on a high and inaccessible rock situated above the river Acheron, where they began to dance and, still dancing, threw themselves over the precipice into the gap-

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- 631 this is to be worked out puzzles Greek politicians as much as it does American
642 politicians interested in United States counties, laid out in horse-and-
buggy days and ill adapted to today's rapid-transit world. In any combination,
one center will gain and the other lose, a fact which has local political
repercussions in a democratic system. Some of these become apparent as
one views the work of the community council and its president.

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- 207 In Phrangista, a mountain village of Central Greece, I was shaken out
of pleasant contemplation as two loudspeakers on the village square suddenly
began to inform one and all of the latest news of the day.

- 275 This was in the spring of 1953, and we were on a coffeeshop verandah
243 newly made of concrete. Across the dusty thoroughfare, some hens had
247 discovered wheat sheaves drying in front of the house of the carpenter;
next door, potted geraniums were blooming in the window of a handsome
stone house. We were shut in from the outside world by hazy mountains.
262 The proprietor's wife and daughter had just brought us preserved walnut
sweets in a spoon with the traditional glass of water. One spooned the
sweets, gulped the water, and commented on the good flavor of the walnuts
207 preserved before they had fully ripened. And then came the radio. These
177 loudspeakers, sounding forth noon and evening, featured the broadcasts
from Ioannina, Patras, and Athens. The radio, obviously much more
powerful than the battery sets frequently encountered in the ordinary coffee-
house, aroused my curiosity. I turned to the president of the community
[422] council, who was sitting nearby. He told me that the radio was community-
owned, that it had been placed there by the American Mission, and that it
had "brought civilization" to that place. But the more I talked with him,
the more I realized that bringing in civilization through this medium created
some local administrative problems.

The American Mission, preferring to distribute the radio directly to the
local authorities rather than through a regular government ministry, stipu-
lated that the community would have to provide the gasoline for the motor
which furnished the energy for the radio. So the first problem was to find
the money to buy the gasoline, which cost a great deal by the time it was
transported over the mountains from Lamia. A second problem was locating
someone (in this case, two teen-aged boys) who could operate the
complicated machine and tune in the radio. The president proudly reported
that on the previous day a screw had worked loose and the program was
temporarily interrupted — but only temporarily — for these competent
youngsters quickly found the trouble and replaced the screw.

- 623 Before I left Phrangista, the president wanted me to see the church which
653 the villagers had recently rebuilt. It had been completely and deliberately
651 destroyed by the Nazis. The archbishop had given some funds for its res-
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teration, but most of the job had been done by "personal work" (*prosopike ergassia*). This is an old, old practice whereby the community council assigns the families or adults of the village so many days of "voluntary" labor on a task that needs to be carried out in the community interest. In general, a community may call for ten days of work (or pay in lieu thereof) from each able-bodied villager, although it need not do this if there are no projects requiring this much labor. 623 653 651 727

"Everybody who could," according to the president, "went to the quarries and cut limestone; others cut wood. We paid laborers to construct the lime kiln and then produced our own lime at a saving of twenty million drachmas [over \$1300 then]. While the construction crews were building the new road through here, we brought the stones they unearthed to the church site and, with the help of good masons, put up the structure." Here again local government was getting something done. 316 333

On another trip in 1955, returning from a visit to Mount Athos, the Holy Mountain on a peninsula in Northern Greece, I saw a notice nailed to a plane tree near the main fountain of the village. It looked official, so we went up to have a look. It announced the auctioning off of the right to collect a certain kind of tax: 651 203

*Announcement of Bidding for the Lease of Farming
of Animal Sale Tax for Fiscal Year 1955-56*

The President of the community of Neochori declares that . . . a bidding is announced for Sunday 17 June between 10-12 A.M. in the Community Building for the highest offer to lease the farming of taxes on animal sales during fiscal year 1955-56.

The amount of 3000 drachmas [\$100] has been determined as the first offer and the amount of 300 drachmas as a guarantee to be deposited by any participant. The tax has been determined at two percent on any sale of animals. Citizens having debts in the community are not accepted. The amount of lease shall be paid in four equal installments, the last to be paid on 31 March 1956. All expenses will be charged to the lessor.

Here the local authorities were following the ancient practice of "farming" out the taxes to the highest bidder who, in turn, was expected to derive from rigorous collection much more than he paid for the right. Every time a bleating goat or an ox changed masters, the successful bidder would collect his 2 percent of the sale price.

The community council has other duties in addition to managing a community-owned radio, rebuilding churches, and collecting taxes. It conducts local elections as well. By 1951 the political situation had stabilized to the point that local elections could be held throughout the country. Of the registered voters, a greater proportion of women than men voted, thereby showing their appreciation of the right of suffrage. From nine to thirty-one 623 666 633

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Community

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cil members who are in some way connected with the project or activity. The mayor usually introduces topics for the approval of the council, but no action can be taken before the prefect of the area gives his final approval.

In Stavroupolis, people respond quite emotionally to each method applied by the village government. Problems are discussed by the council before decisions are made and are discussed again by the male population in the coffee-house with interest and emotion. . . . The village government's business is their business and these informally-made decisions are important since no project can operate normally or smoothly if their informal decisions are opposed.⁹

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But no picture of local government is complete without some sketch of the tax and financial picture. According to the 1950-51 legislation, local governments gain their revenues from the following sources.⁹

Property Revenues

- For the use of slaughterhouses
- Grazing rights on communal-owned land

Dues and Excises

- Building dues, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 percent of the amount of cost
- For the use of sidewalks, streets, and public squares
- Dues on hotels, beds, and bills
- Weight and measure excises; advertisement excises
- For the use of municipal and communal property, works and services including garbage and cleanliness, electricity and gas

Direct Taxes

- Tax on agricultural and forestry products: 2 percent mandatory, 4 percent optional
- Tax on cattle; tax on poultry and fish up to 3 percent of price
- Tax on vacant plots within town plan areas in demes over 20,000 and those in the capital area and Thessalonike area
- Tax on property which has gained value owing to deme or communal public works

Indirect Taxes

- Tax on sale and purchase of cattle
- Tax on olive oil dregs

Contributions

- Contributions determined by council not over 30 million drachmas per head in Athens, Piraeus, and Salonika; 15 million on other demes; 5 million in communes

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Personal Work

- In demes and communes under 10,000 population, men over eighteen work ten days a year. Also includes their animals and motor equipment

Loans, Donations and Legacies

Sale of Real Estate and Movable Property

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Although not all of these taxes apply directly to villages, some of them do. Mention has already been made of the personal work on community projects, as well as the tax on sale and purchase of cattle as evidence by the Neochori notice of bids for farming these out. In addition, there is a "head" tax ranging from twenty to fifty cents annually on each animal. A list of animals over two years of age is drawn up in March, or three months before the commune budget is due. Perhaps the most important of these revenues from the peasant point of view is the tax of 2 to 4 percent on his agricultural products, which the local government keeps. He pays this in lieu of a property tax on the land that he owns. When I explained to some of my Greek friends that property taxes were the chief source of revenue for many local governments in America, they asked if I meant agricultural land. When I answered in the affirmative, they were nonplussed and pointed out that it was much fairer to tax the products of the land than the land itself, since the products showed best of all the value of the land. [231] [241] [435]

THE VILLAGE AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

To understand the community council, one must see its relationship with the central government.¹⁰ It does not, for instance, undertake to maintain law and order, since the local police are not under its jurisdiction, nor does it have much to say about its local school, except through an elected school board of limited powers. Even in those affairs where it is supposed to have jurisdiction, such as drawing up its own budget or arranging for the collection of taxes, it has to gain the approval of the nomarch, who is appointed by the Minister of Interior. [623] [631] [625] [871] [634]

Only as I got to know some of the nomarchs did I begin to appreciate the relationship of the central to the local governments. One nomarch, Yannes Gotsis, was in charge of the nomos of Serrai in Macedonia in 1953. He seemed dedicated to his task and epitomized several of the qualities I have come to admire in many Greeks. We discussed the specifics of local government and the part that the nomarch plays, but he soon went beyond the technicalities of administration to something of its philosophy: [631] [634]

In the majority of the Greeks there is a submerged desire to make a better future for as many people as possible. The Greek really wants a better community life, although he at times gives the impression that conflict is his basic urge. But along with his sense of community he has an appreciation for human personality, which means that if another person disagrees with him he does not try by force to get his own opinion accepted; he tries persuasion and explanation. If others continue to disagree, it is not because they fail to appreciate him but because they each have their own personality to put to the use of the community. [828] [578]

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than a two-year stint. But they do get higher pay than those in the army. They must apply for this service, are carefully investigated before they are accepted, and then are carefully trained. Some stay on after their three-year tour of duty is up and are given, at the end of twelve years, a lump sum as severance pay. With this, many of them open up some business of their own. 625
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The field guards, also under the Ministry of Interior, are under a different administration but work closely with the gendarmerie, since many cases, such as theft from a field, involve both services. The gendarmes, because they are responsible for public security, also make their own investigations. In the village of Kyparissia (Peloponnesos) at the time of our visit, the people were temporarily without the services of field policemen, although they still received gendarme service from Tripolis. They were then working out an arrangement to pay a field policeman in products, although they would hold him responsible if he did not find the animals which had damaged crops. They expected him to work only during the day, for there was little danger at night. Far to the north in Epirus, near the Albanian border, we came across field policemen who also assumed security functions not only against animals but also against infiltrators from across the Iron Curtain. 625
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The larger villages and towns serving as centers for governmental services enjoy many advantages that the smaller, more isolated villages do not have. In Dimititsana, in the Gortynia section of the Peloponnesos, the local people say that their economy is kept going only because of the state employees located there. It is the seat of a gymnasium (secondary school), a lower court, the gendarmerie command, a field-guard office, a tax office, and a postal and telegraph office. In Northern Greece the governmental facilities in Stavroupolis include: 65-
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1. The court house which serves the area of thirty villages.
2. A police station which also serves a neighboring commune.
3. Farm-security service (field policemen) which operates under the auspices of the government but is supported by a separate local tax on the area. [625]
4. Tobacco board which operates on an area level and is responsible for the taxation and standardization of tobacco. [249]
5. Extension service which serves the whole area. There is a home club which operates under a home agent who belongs to a different institution but is supervised by the extension service. The rural club located in the village operates under the supervision of the extension agent.
6. Forestry-conservation service which controls lumbering and protects the forest sections of the area from erosion.¹²

Perhaps the least appreciated service which the central government carries out for the commune is the collection of those taxes used in the support of church, school, police, and a number of advisory services. Many tax 651
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651 specialists think it undesirable to have over 90 percent of all taxes collected
631 by the national government, as is done in Greece, even though much of it is channeled back through various services to the local communities. At the same time, they admit that there is great reluctance on the part of local authorities to take on the tax-collection function and that in those instances where they do collect local funds they do so inefficiently. Obviously, the golden mean has not yet been found in this delicate area of the relationship between local and central government.¹¹

647 When the topic of conversation turns from the services to the officials who carry them out, local informants respond fast and furiously, much of the comment in disapproving tones. I have yet to find a description of Greek life, past or present, that deals very kindly with Greek officialdom. This might be said of many countries, but in Greece the lowly and even high-placed official is beset with so many difficulties that it is a wonder he functions at all. His first problem is the low standards traditionally expected of the civil servant. Most Greeks think that it is perfectly proper procedure
647 for them to bestow a favor upon some official so that he will give their case
662 preference, either in considering it before other cases or in recognizing certain extenuating circumstances in their favor. The law may or may not be abrogated and regular channels set aside, but the irregularities deal quite often with rearrangements and interpretations within the scope of the limits set by the law so that one person gets preferential treatment over others. When one comes face to face with the great number of papers that have to be signed to do even a simple transaction involving governmental authority, one realizes how great is the temptation to bribe or bring to bear some other consideration (such as working through the good graces of a relative of the official) to shorten the red tape and wind up the matter more quickly than usual. Not all officials would condone such measures, but they are subjected to much temptation.

647 A second problem, tied in with the first, is the low compensation which
[465] officials receive in the face of increased living costs. Since many govern-
[464] ment workers cannot live even modestly on their salaries, they take on other commitments. These part-time jobs cause them to slight their full-time government employment, for which supervision is frequently lax.

[661] Insecurity in the job is a third difficulty for many of the higher officials.
[645] The ministries, which in countries like France are run by highly skilled civil servants no matter how many cabinet ministers come and go, are staffed in Greece by people, many quite capable, who are apt to be swept out of office when a new minister comes in. Many, because of sheer competence and skillful legerdemain, manage to survive from one change of ministers to the next, but are never sure that they will weather the next changeover. In some ministries there have been as many as forty different ministers in six years.

THE AREA SURROUNDING VASILIKA · 9

the easy access to roads and transportation to and from the village has important consequences for its culture and social structure.

The Boeotian plain is bounded by mountain systems and the sea. Running west and north, the Parnis, Kithaeron, and Helicon ranges as well as Parnassos itself separate it from the plains of Attica. The town of Lamia on the small Sperchios plain to the north and the west can be reached only by traversing parts of the Kallidromon and Ghiona mountains. To the east, an extension of the Kallidromon range makes access to the Gulf of Atalanti difficult. But the most important road which runs over and around the mountains and through the plains from Athens to Thessalonika has been paved throughout its length since World War II. It is now a two-lane asphalt highway which serves as a truck and bus route of major importance in the communications system of the country. In most of Boeotia, the highway runs more or less parallel with and not far from the tracks of the Athens-to-Thessalonika railroad.

The village of Vasilika lies on the slope of a low ridge just a half mile off this main highway. Since the summer of 1956, a local bus comes through the main street of the village twice a day, at 6:00 in the morning and at noon.

Going in the direction of Athens, ninety miles distant, the bus passes a British Petroleum (BP) station and restaurant a mile and a half down the road and traverses several villages. Its destination, however, is usually Levadhia, fifteen miles from Vasilika. Levadhia is the provincial capital and marketing center of some 12,000 population. Here bus connections to Athens may be made.

In the opposite direction, the nearest village of some size and importance is Kifisokhori. It lies five miles up the road from Vasilika. Kifisokhori has, among other facilities not available in Vasilika, flour mills, large grocery stores, barbers, doctors, a pharmacy, a movie, and several taxis. Whether they use the bus or load their horses with flour for the mill and walk by way of the shortcut through the fields, the people of Vasilika go most frequently to Kifisokhori.

Further north and off to the west, but only about eight miles past Kifisokhori, is Amphiklia. This town is the seat for tax collections and other governmental financial matters for the fiscal district in which Vasilika is situated. On the 16th of each month, for example, the priests of the village within Amphiklia's jurisdiction gather in the town to collect government salaries. Amphiklia also has a coeducational gymnasium (the approximate equivalent of an American high school and junior college combined). Several boys and girls from Vasilika live in that town to attend the school.

The people of Vasilika can also travel in the direction of the sea. The dirt road which starts at the highway leads to the houses of the village, then becomes the main street, and finally extends beyond the settlement between the borders of the fields and the foot of the ridge on which the village is situated. Never free of ruts, of dust, and in the winter, of mud, the road narrows and deteriorates further as it passes the last village house. Nevertheless, pedestrians, donkeys, horses, tractors, and even, with some difficulty, trucks and buses can get through. Half a mile past the last village house, at the banks of the Kiphisus, this road meets the road to Atalanti. Buses from Levadhia that have turned off

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the community. The secretary tends to remain in office for many years, thereby becoming the equivalent of a permanent civil servant.

The president is held responsible for the completion of the tasks assigned to him and to his council. These include registration of births and deaths, a census of males every five years, the physical maintenance of the roads and public wells in the village, the preparation of the community tax rolls, and the preparation of an annual village budget.

In a community the size of Vasilika the maintenance of vital statistics is not an onerous task, since births, deaths, and the age and sex distribution of the population are matters of common knowledge. The maintenance of village property is a more complicated matter. Funds for materials are available in the village's account, which is held by the treasury at Amphiklia. The community may not draw on its account without the approval of the nomarch. Therefore, any public works program in the village is first formulated by the council and then sent for final approval to the nomarch's office. Village males who are more than fifteen years old are responsible for providing labor for road building and for minor repairs of village property. They may either give a certain number of days a year to work on such public projects or fulfill the obligation by furnishing money for a substitute. There is no effective practical way of enforcing adherence to the commitment. The state of the village roads and wells depends, therefore, on whether the village men are willing to work together to create a village asset.

In the course of our 1955-1956 stay at Vasilika a special impetus for road repairs presented itself. The council had requested that one bus a day traveling between Kifisokhori and Levadhia be rerouted so as to pass through the village. The nomarch had indicated that he would approve the change if the village road was repaired, and he authorized the necessary materials. One day in March, truckloads of earth were brought into the village and about one quarter of the adult male population shoveled the loose earth into the main ruts on the village road. The road was superficially improved thereby, and a month or so later a bus was routed through the village. The poor drainage from one of the wells was not corrected, however, so that the regular spillage from the well quickly restored the old puddles in the road.

The men and boys who worked on the road project lacked their customary vigor. Indeed, the majority of the male population of the village claimed to have work to do in the fields that day and did not join in the road work at all. There was much joking, teasing, and clowning while the work was going on, and the efforts of two of the older men to convince the group to set to work with a will were unavailing. The attitude of the road workers requires explanation because all the villagers were agreed on the importance of the new bus route and they actively dislike mud. The muddiness of the village road in winter and early spring was a particular subject for comment and several times evoked the question, "Do you have mud in America, too?" An Athenian who visited the village in late spring was critical of the villagers because their *aghora* was unpaved. "Don't you have a lot of mud all winter?" she asked. "Oh no, we don't have any mud in winter. Very little," was the response from one of the villagers. He would not even admit to so unsightly a condition.

94 THE VILLAGE: AS A COMMUNITY

653 The reluctance of the villagers to work on the road seems to result not
461 from a lack of motivation but rather from a more compelling distaste for manual
491 labor, and especially for such work when it does not directly or immediately
benefit each man's own family. Several years later when a new school was built,
some of the parents of the school children helped with parts of the construction.
The other villagers did not.

651 The preparation of the community tax rolls is an important responsibility
623 of the village council. Since taxes are based on land tenure, on produce, and on
livestock ownership, the council must prepare lists of people who own land
within the boundaries of the *kinotis*. The lists include for each person information
on the number of *stremata* in each parcel of land he owns, on the kind of
crop raised on each parcel, and on the quality of the land. Lists of the number
of horses, mules, sheep, and goats owned by each villager are also compiled.
Donkeys and chickens are not taxed and no listing is made of them. The tax is
calculated for each item and the completed tax rolls are posted. A villager may
feel that he has been unfairly treated, that, for example, the quality of his vine-
yard has been overestimated or that he has fewer sheep than the number listed. In
[627] such a case he can request a revision from the council. His request is usually
granted and that settles the matter. If he is not satisfied, he may ask for a hear-
ing before a grievance committee, the members of which are proposed by the
council from among the villagers. Any decision of the committee is subject to
[634] the veto of the nomarch. In Vasilika disputes over tax rolls are said not to occur,
651 and no grievance committee has been established for many years. There had
628 been a dispute with Parori in the 1930's over the boundaries of the two com-
692 munities. Since each *kinotis* receives taxes from the land within its boundaries the
question of where one *kinotis* begins and the other ends is of considerable im-
portance. The argument between the two villages was finally settled in the courts.

641 In connection with the preparation of tax rolls, the president has some
651 power over the shepherds living in the community. Anyone classified as a non-
621 resident of Vasilika must pay double the rate for pasturing his animals there. If
233 no permission has been granted, he must pay triple the rate for residents. The
[622] question of when and if the new settlers in Vasilika—the shepherds, who had
been living there since 1950—would be considered residents of Vasilika, that is,
full-fledged citizens of the *kinotis*, was of significance both to the village and to
the shepherds. They were finally granted this privilege in 1959.

423 The actual process of preparing the tax rolls consists of a series of agree-
651 ments among the villagers, including their council members, as to what amount
[623] of property they will declare. In consequence, the tax rolls do not necessarily
[583] represent an accurate and complete accounting of property ownership in the
kinotis. Farmers often try to hide some of their holdings and keep some of their
transactions quiet. For example, in order to pay less in taxes on the value of
dowries, the records may show the transfer of a smaller parcel of land to the
groom than the one privately agreed on and later privately carried out. Records
[652] are probably being kept more accurately now, since credit from the Agricultural
Bank is based on land holdings, and proof of ownership must be given to the
bank.

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The village council also has initial jurisdiction over monies which are not derived from the taxes already mentioned. There is a levy amounting to two percent a year of the value of the cotton and wheat produced by each farmer, three percent of the value of any inheritance, and three percent of the value of money and property given as a dowry for any village girl. The proceeds of these taxes are deposited in the village account in Amphiklia. A tax on tobacco production is paid to the national government. The amount collected from the tobacco tax is redistributed to all communities in Greece on a per capita basis for schools, roads, and the like. Tobacco-growing villages like Vasilika receive an additional sum in proportion to the quantity of tobacco produced in the community. 651 [623] 652

Initial jurisdiction in the disposal of all monies belonging to the *kinotis* consists in the preparation of the village budget by the council. The task is done under the close supervision of the nomarch's office. Printed forms for village budgets are available at stationery stores and must be purchased and used. The form includes a list of items for which the community may be expected to spend its money and another list of items from which income is derived. It is the secretary's work actually to fill in the form in quadruplicate. He does so at a meeting of village secretaries called by the nomarch and held in Levadhia. The forms are then checked by the nomarch's office and some changes may be imposed. The expenses listed on the form include the secretary's salary, the salaries of the two village policemen, the salary of an assistant treasurer in Amphiklia, whatever is due the tax collector (who seemed in 1956 to be getting six percent of the amount collected), rent to the church for office space, several newspapers brought by train from Athens each day, books for the school (but not for individual students), road repairs, and the like. The completed document becomes, in fact, a theoretical model for appropriate village income and expenditure rather than a reasonable estimate of future financial transactions. Some of the income actually will be deposited in the account of the village and some of the expenditures will be made, but most will not, and even those transactions that do occur may not be made in the sums designated in the budget. 652 623 634 624

Let us consider income first. The collection of taxes from the farmers is not carried out regularly. When no collector comes to the village, the farmers are supposed to go to Amphiklia to pay their taxes, but few do so. During our stay in the village, a new collector came to Vasilika and sat in the *aghora* for an entire day accepting money from the farmers. They paid only part of their previous year's assessment, and so remained a year in arrears. The interest charge on late tax payments is only sporadically collected from the farmers. Just as the collection of monies is irregular, so is the payment of salaries and the expenditure of other funds. For example, the secretary at one point had not received his monthly salary of 350 drachmas for several months. The use of monies for other purposes depends on the interest of the villagers in village projects, and for the most part such interest is lacking. The village governing body and the secretary fulfill the formal responsibilities placed upon them by the national government, but do not seem to feel that the forms must reflect reality. 651 [465] [623] [624]

It is clear from the foregoing that in the formal political organization of Greece the village council has little power even over affairs for which it has some 623

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planting that season accepted the fact with resignation. The agitation died down after several days and the matter was not mentioned again. 312
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Let us return now to the other officials and organizations that have responsibilities concerning the village as a whole. Law enforcement in Vasilika is in the hands of two *agbroflakes* (rural policemen). They are appointed by the nomarch and are responsible for preventing and detecting animal trespass in the fields and thefts of produce as well as of personal property. They also watch sales of cotton and tobacco and can therefore furnish information of value for estimating produce taxes. The village police are sometimes called in to deal with disorderly conduct or with any physical violence which threatens to become serious. The *agbroflakes* wear grey uniforms with green trim and are easily distinguished from the other villagers. Vasilika's police used to be *kseni* (strangers) who came from two different neighboring villages, but in 1961 the men were natives of the village who were relatives of the then current president. 625
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There are two other semigovernmental village-wide organizations: the agricultural cooperative credit society, and the welfare committee. The villagers elect a president of the credit society, whose signature is necessary on almost all requests for credit, since the Agricultural Bank works in conjunction with the cooperative. The village priest, the president of the council, and the president of the agricultural credit society constitute the welfare committee. They attest to the financial need of a villager who wishes to avail himself of free government welfare services. In most cases, however, the village families who occasionally need help receive irregular gifts of food and clothing from other village families, and their plight is not considered a matter for joint village action. When several cartons of surplus American butter, cheese, and powdered milk reached the village, it was the priest who distributed the goods. On that occasion, the daughter of one of the recipients brought some butter (which the villagers usually do not use in cooking or baking) to a neighbor's daughter, who contributed eggs, flour, and sugar. The two girls spent a busy afternoon mixing a cake according to a half-remembered recipe given them by an extension worker some years before. The cake was not a success by any standards for such confections, but the girls were satisfied because they had produced a European-style sweet. 292
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The Village School

The village school is supervised and controlled by the Ministry of Education in Athens. The teacher is appointed by the ministry, which also prescribes the curriculum. In Vasilika, in 1955-1956, the school had thirty pupils distributed unevenly among the six grades. The first grade had the largest number of children because its ranks were augmented by the children of the shepherds, some of whom had had no previous schooling and were assigned to the first grade regardless of age. A man originally from the Peloponnesus taught the children. He had married a woman from Parori, who was herself one of the 872
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COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

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slavia and Albania come together, and a Turkish Moslem minority in Thrace. Official figures on the size of these minorities have not been published, but in all probability neither much exceeds 60,000 persons. 563

Greece is a small country, with a total area of slightly more than 50,000 square miles, or just about the size of the state of Illinois. It is also a poor country, lacking in any very important natural resources, short of fuel, but blessed with a magnificent climate similar to that of southern California. The country is very mountainous. Patches of fertile land, none of them very large, are separated from each other by tangles of barren hill and mountain. The main crops are wheat, grapes, olives, cotton and tobacco; and of these tobacco is by all odds the most important for foreign trade, since all the wheat and nearly all the cotton, wine and olive oil are consumed within the country, leaving only a surplus of tobacco, currants and a few other specialized agricultural products for export. 433
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Industry is comparatively weak. Greek industrial exports have seldom been able to compete in price or quality on world markets. The Greek merchant marine, on the other hand, is one of the important fleets of the world; but many Greek-owned ships are not registered in Greece, and many of the most successful Greek shipowners do not live in the country of their birth. The reason is that Greek taxes on ships and shipowners are heavier than those levied by some other countries, and the shipowners therefore find it expedient to register their ships and take their profits elsewhere. They do, however, often recruit their crews in the home country, and thus offer a source of employment to several thousand Greeks. 433
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Greece fought on the Allied side in both the first and second world wars, suffered German and Italian occupation between 1941 and 1944, and became a special British "sphere of influence" in political and military matters during 1944-46. Since 505
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622 As one would expect in any small community whose members
624 are acquainted from childhood, the effectiveness of formal leadership depends very much upon the personalities of the office holders. In some villages, the president and secretary have little real importance. As a minimum, they must keep records to
[702] allow the army to draft the young men when their age group
[653] is called up, and it is their duty to muster the able-bodied villagers for a fixed number of days' labor on roads or other public works when ordered to do so by officials of the central government. This labor service is the only form of direct taxation now enforced upon peasants, and money payment may be substituted for personal service if anyone cares to do so.

622 Only when a village chooses to undertake local improvements requiring money or supplies from outside sources does
631 the sphere of local government expand from this legal minimum. In such cases, the village president, perhaps assisted by
652 some other members of the council, is expected to represent the village in all dealings with the agents of the central government from whom help is sought; and if the village contracts a corporate loan for some project, then the president becomes responsible for collecting the sums needed to repay the loan.

621 Generally, the villagers of Greece have a deep-seated and not
654 altogether groundless distrust of outsiders, particularly of government representatives, whom they suspect of being more
x 178 often out to fleece than to help them. Long and persistent persuasion is therefore usually required on the part of government
[609] officials to overcome this suspicion, and open the way for technical or other improvements in village life. More often than not, the initiative in bringing about the changes which have come to many villages in the past ten years came from outside the village, from the central government. Only after a start had been made, and the practical advantage of some new crop or technique had been demonstrated on a small scale, did the farmers

[Hill Villages]

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THE VILLAGES

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villagers know that they are now much better off than the people in Yugoslav Macedonia, with whom they so recently felt a degree of kinship.

Since 1954 no representative of the Greek government has lived in the village. An army detachment, which had been there from 1949, departed in 1954, leaving patriotic slogans on the walls of the buildings used as barracks. No gendarmes came to replace the soldiers. Hence the village has been left very largely to its own devices. The inhabitants like it that way. As is true of all villages in Greece, the government no longer tries to collect direct taxes from Kotta (as it did before the war), but contents itself with a 2 per cent sales tax on products sold in town markets. This, for Kotta, amounts to paying almost no taxes at all, for the inhabitants sell almost nothing. This, too, pleases the villagers.

[727] Kotta, therefore, is a community in which thoroughly old-fashioned attitudes prevail. In spite of the harrowing guerrilla war — or rather because of it — life has resumed its old, familiar channels; and since everyone now has enough to eat without having to venture into the outside world, the villagers seem well content to settle down within their nearly self-sufficient valley and let the world go by.

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The real question for the future is whether or not the village will proceed once again to breed children on the reckless scale that prevailed before. The age structure of the surviving population is altogether anomalous, the removal of all children between the ages of two and fourteen in 1948 having left a great gap. Moreover, military losses and emigration overseas mainly affected young men and women of the next older age groups. The potentially childbearing population has therefore been drastically depleted, so much so that out of a total of seventy-seven families in 1956, the village contained only four or five couples of childbearing age. (One must bear in mind that in a

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621 a distinguished man in any company. Authority seemed to rest
631 as naturally upon his shoulders as the callouses rested upon
178 his palms. This easy relation between village officers and the
people of their community had definitely not been character-
istic in 1947.

621 Local government in Greece was suffering, however, from a
631 chronic and serious handicap. Local authorities lacked funds,
652 and could seldom do anything beyond routine administration
without borrowing from some agency of the central govern-
ment.¹ The result of this situation was to extend greatly the
real authority and influence of the central government over lo-
cal affairs. Village and municipal authorities spent a great deal
of time waiting in the anterooms of officials of the central gov-
ernment in the hope of securing money with which to carry
through some local improvement.

621 Villages had always depended on the Agricultural Bank or
651 on one of the central ministries for finding money for any im-
652 portant project; cities and towns until 1949 had financed their
178 local expenditures mainly through excise duties imposed upon
631 goods brought into the municipality. Before that year, long
lines of peasant carts, waiting their turn at municipal excise
stations, were a frequent sight in the outskirts of every town.
Internal tariffs were abolished in 1949, however, and the share
of the cigarette tax, levied nationally, which was assigned to
municipalities in lieu of these excises proved generally inade-
quate. Town governments were therefore in poor shape finan-
cially, and any public improvements that were made came from
special grants or loans from the central government.

[633] 1. The municipality of Athens, for example, had been insolvent for as
[365] long as anyone cared to recall. The problem was such that in 1955 and
again in 1956, the Athens Power Company threatened to cut off the supply
of electricity to municipal institutions unless some of the back bills were
paid.